

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A surgical stapling device comprising:

a frame having proximal and distal ends;

a body portion defining a stationary handle, the body portion being secured to the proximal end of the frame;

a trigger pivotably secured to the body; and

a head portion including an anvil assembly and a cartridge assembly, the anvil assembly being secured to the distal end of the frame, the cartridge assembly and the anvil assembly being movable in relation to each other between spaced and approximated positions;

wherein the anvil assembly includes an anvil and a stiffener plate, the anvil including a plurality of staple forming pockets and defining a channel, the stiffener plate being configured to fit substantially within the channel and providing added strength to the anvil assembly to permit a reduction in size of the head portion.

Claims 2-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (previously presented): The surgical stapling device of Claim 1, wherein the stiffener plate and the anvil are formed of stainless steel.

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Claim 20 (previously presented): The surgical stapling device of Claim 1, wherein the frame includes right and left frame members, the anvil assembly being secured between the distal end of the right and left frame members.

Claim 21 (previously presented): The surgical stapling device of Claim 20, wherein the anvil assembly further includes a spacer plate.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The surgical stapling device of claim 21, wherein the spacer plate is positioned between the stiffener plate and the anvil.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The surgical stapling device of claim 1, wherein the ~~spacer~~ stiffener plate further includes a slot adapted for slidably receiving an interlock movable between a first position and a second position, the interlock inhibiting distal travel of a thrust bar when in the first position.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The surgical stapling device of claim 23, wherein the interlock is normally biased towards the first position.